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WORK OF THE SUKHUMI MEDICOBIOLOGICAL STATION, ACADEMY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES USSR

Dr Med Sci G. Yu. Malis

The Foundation in 1927 at Sukhumi of the State Breeding Establishment for Apes and Monkeys (lately reorganized and renamed the Medicobiological Station, Academy of Medical Sciences USSR) made it possible to use apes and monkeys as experimental animals for the study of infectious diseases and for investigations in the field of physiology of the higher nervous system. During the early years of the station's existence, its work dealt mainly with the acclimatization of the animals. Because this period had become too protracted, the 1950 Joint Session of the Academy of Sciences USSR and the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR on I. P. Pavlov's Physiological Teaching aided in reorganizing the work of the station.

At present, work is being done mainly at the Laboratory of Physiology and Pathology of the Higher Nervous System, the Laboratory of Experimental Oncology, the Laboratory of Pathology of Infectious Diseases, and the Clinical Division. A great number of investigations have been carried out during the past 25 years by members of the staff of the station and investigators from central institutes who were sent there to do special experimental work. The Laboratory of Physiology and Pathology of the Higher Nervous System has worked on conditioned reflexes, fundamental laws of the activity of the higher nervous system, types of activity of this system, analysis of the mechanism of conditioned motor reflexes (L. N. Norkina), and the effects of lobotomy on higher nervous activity (P. I. Korovin).

Since 1950, the emphasis has been mainly on practical clinical aspects. Of great interest is the work of G. O. Magakyan and Z. I. Daneliya on high blood pressure. It was established that apes and monkeys suffer from high blood pressure and exhibit clinical symptoms of this disease which are identical with those shown by humans. G. O. Magakyan, V. G. Satulo, and G. M. Golubev designed an apparatus which permits automatic recording of the blood pressure in animals and humans. By means of this apparatus, measurements can be carried out even in small blood vessels, such as the digital or temporal arteries. This apparatus is of great practical significance.

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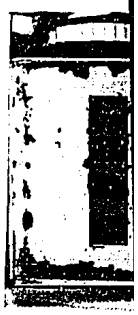

Work done by the Laboratory of Physiology and Pathology of the Higher Nervous System also included studies of the influence of the cerebral cortex on the daily periodicity of physiological functions (Prof A. D. Slonim). Academician K. M. Bykov's monograph The Cerebral Cortex and Internal Organs contains an entire chapter on these studies.

The effects of therapeutic sleep on the diurnal rhythm of physiological functions were also investigated. It was shown that under the effect of prolonged sleep the customary diurnal rhythm may be broken, with the result that a new rhythm can be acquired much more easily. This investigation will presumably be of value for the solution of practical problems encountered in connection with work at health resorts (Ye. Cherkovich).

The effect of a number of drugs (phenamine, methythiouracil, and barbiturates) on the diurnal rhythm was also studied by the Laboratory of Physiology and Pathology of the Higher Nervous System.

Of great importance is a number of investigations that have been carried out by the Laboratory of Pathology of Infectious Diseases. In this group of investigations, the fundamental tendency of Soviet medicine toward the prophylaxis of diseases is particularly apparent. Members of the staff of the station together with scientists assigned to the station from the central institutes of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR are working on the creation of experimental models of various infectious diseases. This is followed by development of methods of immunization against these diseases as well as a study of various therapeutic agents, including antibiotics. Considerable work has been done on the study of tetanus (P. F. Zdorovskiy), measles (P. G. Sergeyev), and dysentery (E. K. Dzhikidze, A. S. Aksenova and S. M. Pekerman).

The activity of the Laboratory of Experimental Oncology covers a wide field. The director of this laboratory, Prof N. N. Petrov, Corresponding Member, Academy of Sciences USSR and Active Member, Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, is the oldest living oncologist of the USSR. He has been recently elected Honorary Chairman of the Surgical Society of Georgia. His laboratory conducts studies on the origin, course, and therapy of malignant tumors.

The greatest scientists of the USSR conduct work at the Sukhumi Medicobiological Station. New personnel are being trained under their direction. During 1950 - 1952, staff members of the station have defended one doctor's dissertation and three candidates' dissertations. Practical physicians connected with the medical institutions of Sukhumi also take an active part in the work at the station.

The Sukhumi Medicobiological Station has accomplished a large amount of useful work during the 25 years of its existence. However, the achievements of the station up to its 25th anniversary [celebrated in 1952] are inadequate in the light of the new tasks set at present before USSR medical science. It is necessary to conduct critical and creative discussions among members of the station's staff, to popularize and publish promptly the results of investigations carried out in its laboratories (at present, great delays occur in connection with publication), to secure to a greater extent the participation of talented young people who are engaged in practical medical work, and to adapt the program of scientific research more closely to the requirements of clinical medicine.

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